

AN ARMENIAN VERSION OF
THE HOMILIES ON
THE HARROWING OF HELL

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BELIEF that Christ had descended into hell to free the souls imprisoned there since the creation of man was very popular during the Middle Ages. Referred to in veiled terms in Apostolic writings, commented and amplified by the Church Fathers, the account of Christ's triumph over Satan also formed the subject of several apocryphal texts.¹ The so-called Gospel of Nicodemus, that is the second part of the *Acta Pilati*, is the best known among these, but while this story enjoyed great popularity in western Europe, it does not seem to have been widely spread in the East Christian world. Only a few Greek copies have survived, and no version in Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopian or Arabic has been discovered so far.² This is very surprising, for there are numerous references to the destruction of hell in the writings of the Eastern Church Fathers, especially in those of Ephrem Syrus, and the Harrowing of Hell is the iconographic type adopted in East Christian art for the Resurrection of Christ.

Greek homilies which related Christ's descent in a dramatic manner seem to have found greater favor. The Easter Eve homily, wrongly ascribed to Epiphanius of Cyprus, exists in Coptic, Arabic and Armenian versions.³ The story of the liberation of the souls is told in greater detail in the homilies ascribed to Eusebius of Alexandria or to Eusebius of Emesa and it is with the Armenian version of these homilies that the present study is concerned.

The Greek homilies on the Coming of John the Baptist into hell, on the Betrayal, on the Devil and Hades were first published by Mai, then by Augusti and by Thilo who added the homily on the Freeing of the Souls in Hades previously published by Savile and Montfaucon among the spurious

¹ J. A. MacCulloch, *The Harrowing of Hell* (Edinburgh, 1930). Except for the Gospel of Nicodemus the most important of the apocryphal texts is the Gospel of Bartholomew. A. Wilmart et E. Tisserant, "Fragments grecs et latins de l'évangile de Barthélemy," in *Revue Biblique* (1913) 161–190, 321–368; U. Moricca, "Un nuovo testo dell'Evangelio di Bartolomeo," in *Revue Biblique* (1921) 481–516, and (1922) 20–30. See also Coptic and other versions mentioned in these articles.

² C. Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha* (Leipzig, 1853) p. LXXIII. Montague R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1926) 95.

³ Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, 43, 440–464. For the Oriental versions see Henri De Vis, "Homélie cathédrale de Marc Patriarche d'Alexandrie," in *Le Muséon*, XXXV (1922) 37 and "Allocution de Timothée d'Alexandrie," in *Le Muséon*, XLVII (1934) 24, note 31. For the Arabic version see G. Graf, "Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur" in *Studi e Testi*, 118 (1944) 357. The Armenian version occurs in a number of manuscripts, for instance Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate, No. 154; Venice, Mechitharist Library, Nos. 456 and 1014. In the Catalogue of the Venice manuscripts, Sarghissian states that the Greek original of this homily has not yet been published (vol. II, col. 48), but this is obviously a mistake for the opening sentence, which has been quoted, is an exact translation of the homily published in Migne, P.G. 43, 440.

works of John Chrysostom.⁴ All four sermons were reprinted by Migne. For the first two he followed the text of Augusti's first edition, based on the manuscript in Vienna, No. 284, and he gave in the notes the text of the Vaticanus No. 1633 published by Mai (P.G. 86.1, 509–536); the third sermon also reproduces the text of the Vaticanus, and in the notes we find as *editio altera* the text of Vienna No. 307, and as *editio tertia*, that of Vienna No. 284 published by Augusti (P.G. 86.1, 384–406). The fourth sermon reproduces the text of Thilo's edition (P.G. 62, 721–724).

Only two versions of these homilies have been known so far. In 1905 E. K. Rand published a Latin version of the third and fourth sermons, entitled *Sermo de confusione diaboli*, which corresponds closely to the shorter recension of Migne's *editio altera*. Rand was the first to call attention to the dramatic qualities of the homily so ably discussed later by G. La Piana. He dated the manuscript of the Latin version in the ninth century and showed that there already existed at that time a text in which the different parts were combined into a single narrative.⁵

The old Slavic version published for the first time in 1647,⁶ and again in 1885,⁷ seems to have escaped the attention of most of the scholars who have studied these homilies.⁸ It appears already in manuscripts of the twelfth century and gives us, in a continuous narrative and in a shorter form, the contents of all four sermons. We have the greater part of the homily on the Coming of John; the conversation between Satan and Hades is somewhat shorter and the rhetorical developments at the end are omitted (P.G. 86.1, 509–520). Judas's remark that he will go to stir up the Jews against Christ serves as a transition to the homily on the Betrayal (P.G. 86.1, 525–533), which is considerably shorter, but which is obviously an abbreviation of the longer Greek sermon, for some of the rhetorical questions addressed by the preacher to Judas have been retained. The third and fourth

⁴ See the references to these different editions and the discussion of the attributions in G. La Piana, *Le rappresentazioni sacre nella letteratura bizantina dalle origini al sec. IX*. (Grottaferrata, 1912) 80–82.

⁵ E. K. Rand, "Sermo de Confusione Diaboli," in *Modern Philology*, II (Chicago, 1904–5) 261–78.

⁶ A reference to this publication in the *Moskovskii Sbornik* is mentioned by A. Popov, *Bibliograficheskie Materialy Opisanii Sbornika russkago pis'ma kontsa XII veka in Chteniia v imperatorskom obshchestve istorii i drevnostei rossiskikh pri Moskovskom Universitete*, I part, Jan.–March (Moscow, 1879) 33–34.

⁷ L. Stojanović, "Nekoliko rukopisa iz tsarske biblioteke u Beču," in *Glasnik Srpskoga Učenog Društva*, 63 (1885) 78–88.

⁸ N. Bonwetsch, "Die apokryphen Fragen des Bartholomäus," in *Nachrichten von der königl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Phil.-hist. Klasse* (1897) 31, refers to the Slavic version found in a manuscript in Vienna between two sections of the apocryphal text of the Questions of Bartholomew. I am indebted to Mrs. Nathalie Scheffer for the translation of this and the other Russian texts.

sermons have also been substantially abridged, especially the dialogues between Satan and Hades, and the narrative ends with the rejoicings of the righteous who are being led into paradise, without relating their actual entry (P.G. 86.1, 384–405; 62, 721–723).

The Arabic text of Christ's victory over death and Satan, published with a Russian translation by Kratchkovski, bears little resemblance to the homilies ascribed to Eusebius,⁹ but an Arabic version of the latter also exists, though it is still unpublished. In his important book on Christian Arabic literature, Graf listed among the spurious works of John Chrysostom the following homilies: On the Betrayal of Judas, the Descent from the Cross and the Freeing of Adam from Hades; On the Entrance of John the Forerunner into Hades; the Chaining of Satan and the Deliverance of the Souls.¹⁰ These titles suggested a connection with the homilies ascribed to Eusebius, and upon my request the Rev. Jean Mécérian, Professor at the Université Saint Joseph at Beirut and the Rev. Ignace Khalifé were kind enough to examine the manuscript No. 511 of their Library which contains a sermon entitled: "Sermon sur l'entrée de Jean le Précurseur aux enfers et la capture du démon et le salut des âmes de ceux qui sont emprisonnés là; Adam et sa descendance."¹¹ The result of their investigation, for which I am very grateful, was as follows: this sermon is a free translation of the first and fourth homilies ascribed to Eusebius (P.G. 86.1, 509–523 and 62, 721–24), with excerpts of the dialogues between Satan and Hades contained in the third homily (P.G. 86.1, 384 foll.).

I have not been able to find any reference to a Syriac or Coptic version; a search among the spurious works of John Chrysostom might have fruitful results, but it is also possible that the version, if it does exist, is preserved under the name of another writer or is even anonymous.

This is the case with the Armenian version, and I owe its discovery to chance, rather than to a systematic search. In the course of my studies of the illuminated manuscripts preserved at the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem, I came across a collection of miscellaneous texts written in Crimea in 1363. The manuscript (No. 1293) contains proverbs, sermons by Ephrem Syrus and others, the apocryphal story of the questions addressed by S. Gregory the Illuminator to an angel, the life of S. Alexis, the story of King

⁹ Novozavietnyiĭ apokrif v arabskoĭ rukopisi 885–886 goda po R.Khr." in *Vizantiiskii Vremennik*, 14 (1907) 246–75.

¹⁰ G. Graf, *op. cit.*, 349.

¹¹ Title as given by Rev. Mécérian in his letter. For a description of the manuscript see P. Sbath, "Manuscrits orientaux de la Bibliothèque du R. P. Sbath" in *Echos d'Orient*, XXVI (1927) 478, manuscript no. 523, pp. 214–225. In the new pagination this sermon is on pp. 513–530.

Abgar of Edessa. Between these last two texts, on pages 291 to 301 was a story entitled: *History of John, son of Zacharias, concerning the destruction of hell and concerning Satan. How the Lord captured the incorporeal enemy and freed those who had been imprisoned by him*. It did not take long to discover that this text, which has never been published, is a version of the homilies ascribed to Eusebius, with some notable differences which will be discussed below, after giving the translation.¹²

[p. 291]. A certain priest, Zacharias by name, of the course of Abia, had the office of burning incense in the temple of Jerusalem.¹³ And when the time was completed for the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ from the holy Virgin, for the life and redemption of mankind, God sent to the priest Zacharias the archangel Gabriel who said to him: "I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of the Lord and I am sent to speak unto thee."¹⁴ A son will be born unto thee, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear in her old age and he will be the forerunner of the son of God." And he [Zacharias] did not believe, and the angel, having struck him dumb falsely, departed from him. And it came to pass that after twelve days, on the day of October which was the ninth day, [p. 292] he approached his wife, and she conceived, and the forerunner of the coming of the son of God was born. He preached saying: "There cometh one mightier than I after me, know ye him." And he, John, completed his course and, martyred by Herod, was beheaded and entered hell unto those who were imprisoned, and they, seeing the brilliance of the light, recognized him. They began to question him about the sun of righteousness¹⁵ and said: "Will the Lord come here, for great despair possesses us."¹⁶ Others said, "he will not submit himself to torments and death." While the prophets said: "It is necessary for him to suffer death for us, for we knew what was to befall and we prophesied that he will not leave us here for ever." And John said unto them: "O, I beseech you, tell me about him, what you prophesied about his coming to the world, and about the destruction of hell, or the manner of his coming."¹⁷ And Adam approaching said to him: "I was in glory and honor in the pleasant garden [paradise] and the jealous tempter brought me out of paradise. And I beseeched my Lord and said: 'Grant me to enter paradise another time in my life.' And my God said to me: 'Not so, forefather, but go and till the soil from which thou wast made, and I shall come after six thousand years, I shall take body from thy daughter, [p. 293] and I shall be born from a Virgin, [I shall be] baptized and I shall accomplish diverse wonders in Judea. I shall be tormented, crucified, buried, and I shall rise up after three days [a word scratched off] for thee and not only for thee but also for all the prophets. I shall destroy hell and

¹² The passages which correspond to the Greek text are printed in italics.

¹³ Luke I: 5 and 9.

¹⁴ Luke I: 19.

¹⁵ P.G. 86.1, 512 A: ἰδοὺ Ἡρώδης πέμψας ἀπεκεφάλισεν τὸν Ἰωάννην ἐν τῷ δεσμωτηρίῳ. Καὶ πληρώσας τὸν δρόμον ὁ Πρόδρομος, παρεγένετο πρὸς τοὺς κατακλείστους ἐν τῷ ᾄδῃ. Καὶ θεασάμενοι αὐτοῦ τὴν αὐγὴν τοῦ λύχνου ἐγνώρισαν αὐτόν· καὶ ἤρξαντο περὶ τοῦ Ἡλίου τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἐρωτᾶν αὐτόν. . .

¹⁶ P.G. 86.1, 513 A: Παραγίνεται ὁ Κύριος ἐνταῦθα· πολλὸς γὰρ ἀπελπισμὸς κατέχει ἡμᾶς.

¹⁷ P.G. 86.1, 513-514, *editio altera*: Ἄλλοι ἔλεγον· Μὴ πως οὐκ ἔρχεται; μὴ πως οὐ καταδέχεται ὑπομεῖναι θάνατον; Οἱ δὲ προφήται δισχυρίζοντο λέγοντες, ὅτι Δεῖ αὐτὸν θάνατον ὑπομεῖναι δι' ἡμᾶς· ἔγνωμεν γὰρ ἡμεῖς τὰ μέλλοντα γίνεσθαι, καὶ οὕτως μὲν προεφητεύσαμεν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τὴν τοῦ Κυρίου παρουσίαν. Καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς Ἰωάννης εἶπεν τοῖς προφήταις· Δεῦτε, παρακαλῶ, καὶ ἀπαγγείλατέ μοι τί προεφητεύσατε περὶ τοῦ Κυρίου, καὶ εἰ μέλλει ἔρχεσθαι. . .

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bring out those who are imprisoned, and I shall hand the prophets to thee, and thou, taking them, shalt bring them into this paradise, and they shall see thy glory.' And I am and remain in great hope for his words are truthful." And Moses approaching said to John: "This is how I prophesied concerning this hell: For a fire is kindled in mine anger and shall burn into the lowest hell." [Deut. 32:22] And David approaching said to John: "I prophesied about his coming: *He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass*;¹⁸ and again I prophesied about his baptism: The voice of the Lord is upon the waters [Ps. 29:3]; and again I prophesied about his signs and wonders: Come, behold the works of the Lord what signs and wonders he has achieved on the earth [Ps. 46:8]; and again I prophesied about his passion: I was as a deaf man that heareth not [Ps. 38:14], *and they gave me gall for my meat*,¹⁹ and they parted my garments [Ps. 22:18], and lift up, o princes, your gates [Ps. 24:7], and *he hath broken the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron in sunder*,²⁰ and he made captive the prophets and divided the presents among many." And John said to David: "What are the works of God [p. 294] of which thou didst speak." David said: "I did not know the works of God, but only foretold [them]." And John said: "I shall recount his works." The prophets said: "We desired to see [them] and did not see." John said: "I shall recount [them] to you as an eye witness, and not by conjecture, for I myself baptized him. The first sign at Cana in Galilee, the water turned into wine. The second at Capernaum, with five loaves he fed the five thousand and filled twelve baskets. The third at Siloam, he gave sight to the man born blind. The fourth, the paralytic whom they carried on his bed and placed before [him]. The fifth, the man with the dropsy. The sixth, on the thirtieth [?] he healed the sick. The seventh, the man possessed by many devils in the land of the Gergesenes. The eighth, the man Bartimeus. The ninth, he raised the dead [boy] in the city of Nain. The tenth, the ten men and the one who turned back and glorified and blessed God. The eleventh, the daughter of the prince Jairus. The twelfth, the deaf and dumb demoniac who neither spake nor saw. The thirteenth, the bent woman. The fourteenth, Simon's mother-in-law. The fifteenth, the woman with an issue. The sixteenth, he raised the dead girl. The seventeenth, he cleansed the adulteress. The eighteenth [p. 295] he raised Lazarus [dead] for four days. And what more shall I say and what other wonders shall I relate? And he gave me this staff and said: 'Give it to Adam and say to the prophets: Do not despair, behold I shall come and I shall set free the captives from the tyranny of their bonds, and I shall subjugate him who conquered them.'" *And the master of hell seeing their assembly and their joy [said]: "They are arrogant, for though we seized them, yet they were not tormented here. And who is this who has now come, and causes them such rejoicings. What is this joy? We do not know of any tidings of such joy, and behold, I see them in great joy. They have been here for a long while and I have not heard such joy from them."*²¹ *Satan answered and said to him "This is John who was beheaded by Herod, the son of the old woman, and his father's name is Zacharias. He was boastful while he was on earth, and he used to say concerning that man that he is the sun of righteousness. And he caused me some grief; and he used to say to the world that he*

¹⁸ Psalm 72:6; P.G. 86.1, 513 B.

¹⁹ Psalm 69:21; P.G. 86.1, 516 B.

²⁰ Psalm 107:16; P.G. 86.1, 516 C.

²¹ P.G. 86.1; 517-518, *editio altera*: ἰδὼν ὁ ἔδης τὴν διαλογὴν τῶν προφητῶν, καὶ τὴν εὐφροσύνην, εἶπεν πρὸς τὸν διάβολον· Περὶ τίνος λέγουσιν αὐτοὶ ὑψηλόφρονες; τίνος ἔνεκεν φλυαροῦσιν; τίς δέ ἐστιν ὁ νῦν παραγενόμενος, ὅτι οὕτως αὐτοὺς ἐχαροποίησεν, καὶ θάρσος αὐτοῖς προσέθηκεν; Περὶ τίνος αὐτοῖς εὐηγγελίσταο οὐκ οἶδα, πλὴν βλέπω ἐν αὐτοῖς μεγάλην χαράν.

will come to save the world. And thou knowest nothing. I entered into a beautiful woman a confident of my works and during the meal I stirred her up against him, and she had him [p. 296] beheaded and gave the head to her daughter on a charger, and she played with it as with an apple. That is what I did, and he used to say that he is come to save the creatures.”²² And the master of hell answered and said: “See, brother, and ascertain who he is, or from whence he is, or whose son he is, lest by winning him we lose many,”²³ and are tormented with the torments of darkness. See, brother, for if we should make a mistake there will be no resting-place for us and inconsolable mourning will possess us.”²⁴ Satan answered and said: “Be not alarmed. I know from whence he is. He was born in Nazareth, his mother is Mariam and his father’s name is Joseph, a carpenter who worked at the temple; his brothers are James and John and all are his sisters^{24bis} and he himself is called Jesus. His parents took him from Nazareth and fled to Egypt, for they behaved in a disorderly manner.^{24ter} Thou knowest nothing. I devised many wiles; because of him I slaughtered innumerable children by the hand of Herod, if he fled from me then, he cannot do so now, for I know who he is, he is a man, he eats and drinks, he sleeps and wakes. Have no fear whatsoever and be not alarmed by what these men say, I shall change their joy into mourning. I shall enter the Jews and I shall rouse them against him to death on the cross and I shall bring him here and make him [p. 297] thy footstool and then shall I turn these [men] into the deepest mourning.”²⁵ And I shall place thy throne on the clouds and thou shalt travel

²² P.G. 86.1, 517 A–B: ‘Ο δὲ Διάβολος ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν πρὸς τὸν Ἄδην· “Ὁλως μὴ θροηθῆς μηδὲ δειλιάσης ἀπὸ τῶν ῥημάτων αὐτῶν· οὗτος οὖν ὁ παραγενόμενος Ἰωάννης ἐστὶν ὁ Βαπτιστὴς, καὶ μεγαλοθύμων ἐστί. Καὶ γὰρ ὅτε ἦν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, μεγάλα αὐτοὺς εὐεργέτησεν καὶ ἐμαρτύρησεν περὶ ἐκείνου τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, περὶ οὗ νῦν εὐηγγελίσασατο αὐτοῖς, πολὺ μέγαν αὐτοῖς διηγόρευσεν, καὶ μικρά τινα καὶ ἐμὲ ἐλύπησεν. Καὶ ἔλεγεν τῷ κόσμῳ, ὅτι Οὗτός ἐστι ὁ μέλλων λυτρώσαι τὸν Ἰσραὴλ. Καὶ εἰσηλθὼν ἐγὼ εἰς τὴν Ἑρωδιάδα, γυναῖκα καλὴν καὶ ὑπουργόν μου καὶ συγκληρονόμον τῶν ἔργων μου, καὶ δι’ ἐκείνης παρώξυνα βασιλέα· καὶ τοῦτον ἐν ἀρίστῳ ἀπέτεμον, καὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ δέδωκα τῷ κορασίῳ ἐπὶ πίνακι, καὶ ὡς μύλῳ προσέπειαιξεν. Καὶ περὶ οὗ εἶπεν τῇ οἰκουμένη λυτροῦσθαι, οὐδὲ τοῦτον ἡδυνήθη λυτρώσασθαι. . .

²³ P.G. 86.1, 517–520, *editio altera*: Βλέπε, ἀδελφε, καὶ περιέργασαι ἀκριβῶς τίς ἐστιν, καὶ πόθεν ἐγένετο, καὶ τίνος υἱός ἐστιν . . . ἵνα μὴ ὡς θέλομεν ἓνα κερδῆσαι, ὅλον τὸν κόσμον ζημιωθῶμεν.

²⁴ P.G. 86.1, 520 A: καὶ ἐὰν ἀποτύχωμεν, ἀπαραμύθητον ἡμῶν τὸ πένθος γενήσεται, ἀνεκδιήγητος ἡ λύπη.

^{24bis} This passage is taken from Mt. 13: 55–56. “Is not this the carpenter’s son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren James and Joses and Simon and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?” The words “with us” have been omitted and this has resulted in a sentence which means “all are his sisters.”

^{24ter} The idea that Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt because they had committed adultery is to be found in the first part of the *Acta Pilati*, both in the Greek text and in the Armenian version. C. Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha* (Leipzig, 1853) 215. *Apocryphal Books of the New Testament* (in Armenian) (Venice, 1898) 318. F. C. Conybeare in *Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica*, IV (Oxford, 1896) 84.

²⁵ P.G. 86.1, 520 B: ‘Ο δὲ Διάβολος, ἀκούσας ταῦτα, λέγει πρὸς τὸν Ἄδην· Εἰπὼν σοι, ὅτι Μὴ φοβηθῆς ἀπὸ τῶν ῥημάτων αὐτῶν. Ἐγὼ γὰρ οἶδα τίς ἐστι, καὶ οὐ φοβοῦμαι αὐτόν· ἀνθρωπός ἐστιν Ἰησοῦς, τρώγων καὶ πίνων καὶ κοιμώμενος· καὶ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ λέγεται Μαρία, ὁ δὲ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ Ἰωσήφ ἐπιστάμενος τεκτονικὴν ἐπιστήμην. Ὑπάρχουσιν δὲ ἐκ τῆς πόλεως Ναζαρέτ, καὶ ὅτε ἐγεννήθη, ἐζήτηι αὐτὸν ὁ Ἑρώδης ἀποκτείνει· καὶ λαβόντες αὐτὸν οἱ γονεῖς ἔφυγον εἰς Αἴγυπτον. Ἄλλ’ εἰ καὶ τότε ἐξέφυγεν τὰς χεῖράς μου, νῦν ἐμπεσεῖται, καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸν φέρω εἰς τὰς χεῖράς σου [εἰσελεύσομαι γὰρ εἰς τὰς χεῖράς σου]· εἰσελεύσομαι γὰρ εἰς τοὺς Ἰουδαίους, καὶ ἐπεγερῶ τὸ ἔθνος αὐτῶν, καὶ παραδώσουσιν αὐτὸν εἰς κριτήριον, καὶ σταυρώσουσιν αὐτόν, καὶ ἀροῦσιν αὐτοῦ τὸ μνημόσυνον ἐκ τῆς γῆς· καὶ ἄξω αὐτόν εἰς τὰς χεῖράς σου· καὶ τότε πενήθουσιν αὐτοί.

on the wings of the winds; that is what I shall do. Be not frightened by the man; *sometimes in his prayers he said: 'Father, remove this cup from me; my soul is sorrowful unto death.'* Now if he were the son of God, *why should he speak thus?*" The master of hell answered and said to him: "I have not seen him, nor do I wish to see him, and thou, make sure that he is not the son of God. For if he is the son of God and deceives us with such words and wishes to turn us into a laughing stock, then give heed to my words and do not run against him; he will be angered against thee for ever, and woe and alas unto thee and thine."²⁶ Do not wage war against him; see how he smote the Egyptians and took the people away from them, and drowned the Pharaoh in the sea. See, if he should arrive here, *if he is the one who snatched Lazarus from me, do not bring him here, there will be no peace for us. We were the master of Lazarus for four days and I kept watch over him, and he called him forth with his words, and at his formidable word the deep was torn and shuddered, the world shook, and I was dissolved as one dead; and he fled from me like an eagle and disappeared from my sight. Therefore if it is he do not bring him here.*²⁷ See how he snatched from thee [p. 298] the daughter of the prince Jairus who was twelve years old and was not yet fit for marriage [?] and not yet a woman in years; see, do not bring him here." Satan answered and said: "Thou hast lost heart, o effeminate one, thou hast lost heart. I fought against him many a time, and hast thou thus lost heart? He cured the bodies and I stole the souls and I polluted them with my works."²⁸ Knowest thou not that I became the captor and the perverter throughout the world. From the beginning, [at the time of] Noah, I destroyed the world with the flood and brought them all to the deep. I also taught to the Sodomites the works of wantonness and grievous behavior and they became my inheritance and I brought them all to the deep. And Korah, and Dathan and Abiram whom I caused to rise against Moses, they also, together with their soldiers, came into my portion, and dost thou lose heart in this way? *I have thousands of thousands, I can resist him as I wish. Annas and Caiaphas are of one mind with me and Judas is my fellow heir. I can do whatever I wish, do thou only receive him.*"²⁹ Having said this he went to the Jews and roused them against him to death on the cross. As for Jesus, having gone

²⁶ P.G. 86.1, 399–402, *editio altera*: . . . καὶ λέγει· Περίλυπός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἕως θανάτου. Εἰ ἦν Υἱὸς Θεοῦ, πῶς θάνατον ἐφοβείτο; Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἄδης· Ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ ἴδον αὐτὸν, οὔτε ἰδεῖν θέλω, πλὴν ἐὰν ἀκούσης μου, λέγω σοι τὴν ἀλήθειαν, καὶ σημειώσαι μου τοὺς λόγους. Ἐνὶ δὲ, ὅταν μὲν οὐκ ἔστιν Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ· ἐπὶ δὲ ἐκείνός ἐστιν, καὶ τοιαῦτα ῥήματα λέγει λυπούμενος . . . οὐαί σοι ἔστω, ἄθλιε.

²⁷ P.G. 86.1, 389–392, *editio altera*:· Ἐκείνός ἐστι καὶ νῦν, ὃς τότε τὸν Λάζαρον ἤρπασεν; Ἐὰν ἐκείνός ἐστιν, ἐλέησόν με, μὴ ἀγάγῃς αὐτὸν ἐνταῦθα. . . . Ἐγὼ τότε λοιπὸν κατέσκηψα τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Λαζάρου ἐν τέσσαρσιν ἡμέραις, ἔχων αὐτὸν ἐν ἀσφαλείᾳ· . . . καὶ ἐφώνησεν αὐτὸν ἔξω, ἐγένετο ἡ φωνὴ αὐτοῦ φοβερὰ, καὶ ἡ ἄβυσσος ἐσεισθη, καὶ ἡ γῆ ἐτρόμαξεν καὶ ἐγὼ αὐτὸς παρελύθην ἐκ τοῦ φόβου. . . . οὗτος ἐξεπήδησεν ἐκ τοῦ κόλπου μου . . . ὡς ἀετὸς ἐξήλατο, πᾶσαν ἀσθένειαν ἀποθέμενος ἐν ῥοπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ. Ἐκείνον ἐνταῦθα κατακλείσαι οὐ δύναμαι.

²⁸ P.G. 86.1, 392 B–393 A.: Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ διάβολος· Δειλὲ καὶ ἄνανδρε καὶ ὀλιγόψυχε, ἐμοὶ τοσαῦτα κακὰ εἰργάσατο, καὶ οὐκ ἀνεχώρησα ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, οὐδὲ ἐπαυσάμην πολεμεῖν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, καὶ σὺ ἐν κακὸν παθὼν παρ' αὐτοῦ οὕτως ἐδειλίασας; Ἐγὼ τοσαῦτα παθὼν παρ' αὐτοῦ, οὐκ ἐπαυσάμην φιλονικεῖν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. Ἀλλ' ὅτε ἴδον ὅτι τὰς ἐξώθεν ἀσθενείας σωματικὰς θεραπεύει, ἐγὼ ἡρέξάμην τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀφανίζειν διὰ τῶν ἐμῶν ἔργων.

²⁹ P.G. 86.1, 401 A.: Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ διάβολος· Δυνατοὺς ἔχω τοὺς ὑπουργοὺς μου, καὶ οὐ φοβοῦμαι πολεμῆσαι μετ' αὐτοῦ· ἰσόψυχοί μου εἰσιν, μάλιστα Ἀννας, καὶ Καϊάφας, καὶ Ἰούδας· οὗτοι συγκληρονόμοί μου εἰσιν· ἔχομεν δὲ καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν πλῆθος τῶν Ἰουδαίων ὑφ' ἡμᾶς, καὶ δυνάμεθα κατ' αὐτοῦ ὡς δ' ἂν θέλωμεν· μόνον σὺ ὑπόδεξαι αὐτόν.

up with his disciples to the Mount of Olives,³⁰ he stood in prayer and asked for the salvation of his creatures. Seeing the race of men [p. 299] corrupted by the old error, he desired to suffer in Jerusalem for the sake of all nations and tongues who were established there, so that they might all see the miracle and live. As for Satan, when he beheld the signs accomplished on the cross, the sun darkened and the moon, the rocks rent, the earth quaking,³¹ and through the terrible tremor understanding that he was the one come to save the creatures, he said: "Woe unto me, whither shall I go? If I should go up to heaven, he is there, if I should descend to hell, he is near. Lo, I shall descend to hell, and he will snatch the prisoners from me and I shall not be able to withstand him, for very mighty is his power, and had I known that he thus protects the sons of men, I would not have fallen from my glory. Accursed be the day when God made the race of men." And having said this he fled into the abyss, together with his soldiers, like a covey of partridges when they hear the fluttering of the eagle's wings, and he said to the master of hell: "Let us close the gates and strengthen them with bars. Perchance with all our power we may be able to resist him, perchance he will not enter here."³² The master of hell answered and said; "O three-headed Beelzebub, thou art relating thy downfall. I told thee beforehand, do not bring him here. Now if thou art able, rise up and wage battle, for I cannot help [thee]."³³ Having spoken these words they closed the adamantine brass [gates] with iron bars. Our Lord came with a mighty strength and a mighty battle and entered hell. And the powers cried out "Lift up your gates o princes, and the King of glory shall come in." And again the innermost hell without understanding said: "Who is this king?" And the powers cried out and said: "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."³⁴ And the Lord approaching shattered the brass gates and broke the iron bars,³⁵ he tied Satan and spread him over the burning coals and the fiery tusks, and the worms that die not,³⁶ and [also] the multitude of the legions of soldiers, naked, shamed, and confounded, like a net which gathers in the numerous fishes and pours them into the frying pan, they were spread [?] innumerable and unconscious and thus did they fall

³⁰ P.G. 86.1, 401 B.: Ταῦτα ἀκούσας ὁ διάβολος ἀπῆλθεν πρὸς τοὺς Ἰουδαίους, καὶ ἐκίνησεν αὐτοὺς κατὰ τοῦ Κυρίου. . . . Ὁ δὲ Κύριος τῇ νυκτὶ ἐκίνησεν ἡν αὐλιζόμενος ἐν τῷ ὄρει τῶν Ἐλαιῶν μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ. . .

³¹ P.G. 86.1, 403–4 *editio altera*: "Ὅτε δὲ ἴδεν ὁ διάβολος, ὅτι πάντα κατ' οἰκονομίαν ἐγένετο, καὶ τὰ σημεῖα τὰ ἐπὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ γινόμενα, τὸν ἦλιν σκοτιζόμενον, τὴν γῆν σειομένην, τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ σχιζόμενον, τὰς πέτρας διασχιζόμενας. . .

³² P.G. 86.1, 403–4, *editio altera*: αὐτὸν ἐμπαίζόμενον, ἔφηνεν πρὸς τὸν Ἄδην καὶ λέγει πρὸς αὐτόν· Οὐαὶ μοι τῷ ἀθλίῳ, ὅτι ἐνεπαίχθην, βοήθει μου τῇ ταπεινώσει· κλείσωμεν τὰς θύρας, μὴ εἰσέλθῃ ὧδε, ἀσφάλισαι τοῖς μοχλοῖς καὶ ὅλη τῇ δυνάμει ἀντιστῶμεν, τοῦ μὴ δέξασθαι αὐτόν.

³³ P.G. 86.1, 403–4, *editio altera*: Ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἄδης πρὸς τὸν Διάβολον εἶπεν· Τρικέφαλε Βεελζεβούλ . . . οὐκ εἰπὸν σοι, μὴ πολεμήσῃς μετ' αὐτοῦ. . . . ἔξελθε, εἰ δυνατὸς εἶ, καὶ πολέμησον αὐτόν· ἐγὼ γὰρ βοηθήσά σοι οὐ δύναμαι.

³⁴ P.G. 62, 722: Ἐδραμεν οὖν ὁ ἄδης, καὶ ἀπέκλεισε τὰς θύρας, τοὺς μοχλοὺς τοὺς σιδηροὺς ἡσφαλίσατο. Καὶ ἰδοὺ ὁ Κύριος ἔρχεται ἐπὶ τὸν ἄδην, καταδιώκων τὸν διάβολον, καὶ αἱ Δυνάμεις προέτρεχον. Καὶ ἰδοὺ αἱ πύλαι κεκλεισμέναι, καὶ ἐφώνησαν αἱ Δυνάμεις λέγουσαι· Ἄρατε πύλας, οἱ ἄρχοντες, ὑμῶν, καὶ ἐπάρθητε πύλαι αἰώνιοι, καὶ εἰσελεύσεται ὁ Βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης. Καὶ φησιν ὁ ἄδης ἔσωθεν ἀποκρινόμενος· Τίς ἐστὶν οὗτος ὁ Βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης; Καὶ πάλιν αἱ Δυνάμεις φασί· Κύριος τῶν Δυνάμεων αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ Βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης.

³⁵ P.G. 62, 723: Καὶ εὐθέως προσελθὼν ὁ Κύριος τὰς πύλας συνέτριψε, καὶ τοὺς μοχλοὺς συνέθλασε. . .

³⁶ P.G. 62, 723: Τότε λαβὼν ὁ Κύριος τὸν διάβολον ἔδησεν αὐτὸν δεσμοῖς ἀλύτοις, καὶ κατήγαγεν αὐτόν εἰς τὰ καταχθόνια τοῦ ἄδου, καὶ ὑπέστρωσε πῦρ ἄσβεστον, σκώληκας ἀκοιμήτους.

on the coals and sobbing say; "Woe unto us, miserable ones." While the crowd of prophets said: "Come let us mock our enemies." And approaching they trod on his head and said: "Thou didst say: 'I shall place my throne on the clouds, and now thou art fallen on the coals of unextinguishable fire.'" And innumerable multitudes, together with the prophets, flying [?] gave praise to God. And the forefather Adam approaching said to the Lord: "Grant me my request which thou didst promise me, for I await with great hope." And the Lord said to Adam: "Take the multitude of prophets and enter the garden of thy delight; there shalt thou see Enoch and Elias and they shall witness thy glory. For I ascended the cross for thee, and I was slapped for thee." As for the other multitudes, he established them in the dwellings of heaven opposite paradise, in brilliant life, until the coming of the Savior, and they received [?] crowns as it is befitting for saints. And they praised the Lord Jesus Christ who redeemed them with his blood and with a loud voice they exclaimed and said: "*Blessed be the lifegiving passion of Christ and glory be to his holy Resurrection who raised the dead with his cross, and freed [them] from the bonds of prison.*"^{36bis} Blessed be the Father who raised him from the dead. Blessed be the Son who rose from the dead. Blessed be the Holy Ghost who renewed the universe for the glory and honor of the most holy Trinity, for ever and ever, Amen."

As can be seen from the passages in italics and the corresponding Greek text and references in the footnotes, the Armenian version closely follows the Greek original in some parts, more freely in others, long passages are omitted but there are also entire sections which do not occur in the Greek. Leaving the latter aside for the moment, we find the following general correspondence between the Greek and Armenian texts. The major part of the first homily on the Descent of John has been retained and the translation is based on a shorter recension similar to the one preserved in the Vienna manuscript N° 307, Migne, P.G. 86.1, *editio altera*, col. 512-520. The homily on the Betrayal is omitted, as it is also in the Vindob. 307; the third homily on the Devil and Hades is greatly curtailed and the end of the last homily which relates the entry of the souls into paradise is left out (P.G. 62, 724). The text is again closer to that of the *editio altera*.

The Armenian version is purely a narrative; the rhetorical developments, the moralizing discourses, all that pertains to a sermon are absent from it. Instead of the lengthy and somewhat repetitious conversations, we have short and lively dialogues, and the dramatic intensity is heightened through the speedy action. In his important study, *Le rappresentazioni sacre nella letteratura bizantina*, La Piana, considering the homilies ascribed to Eusebius, had suggested that there may have existed a text, derived from the Gospel of Nicodemus and other apocryphal sources which, after passing through different recensions, was modified through additions or sometimes

^{36bis} P.G. 62, 724: Τοιγαροῦν ὑμνήσωμεν τὸν σαρκωθέντα, δοξάσωμεν τὸν σταυρωθέντα, εὐχαριστήσωμεν τὸν ἀναστάντα, ὅπως καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ ζόφου τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν ἐξέλγται. . .

abbreviations. The present Greek text, which differs so much from one manuscript to another, probably dates from the eighth or ninth century.³⁷

The final solution of the problem must await a critical edition of the Greek text and a comparative study of the different versions. The Latin, Slavonic and Arabic versions are dependent on the present, modified Greek text, but the Armenian version, which presents important differences, may go back to an earlier form. If we were to suppose that this shorter text is an abridgement, we must admit that the work has been done with such skill that there is no gap or break in the story, and the action develops with a uniform rhythm. An omission which obscures the meaning can be observed only in one passage. After speaking of John the Baptist and relating the manner of his death, Satan adds: "and he used to say that he has come to save the creatures." The "he" refers obviously to Christ and not to John and the confusion is due to the fact that the end of the sentence is left out, for the Greek reads: "And He whom he said would save the world, could not even save him [John]." But such an omission may be due to a faulty copy and may not occur in other manuscripts.

Whenever there are differences in the order of incidents, or in the context, the Armenian version seems preferable. The Greek homily on the Devil and Hades begins by telling how Satan, upon hearing Christ's words "My soul is sorrowful even unto death," thought He was afraid of death and immediately ran to Hades. In the long conversation which follows, Satan relates how Christ has provoked him by curing those he had smitten, and he ends the long list of miracles by mentioning the raising of Lazarus. Hearing the name of Lazarus, Hades takes fright and urges Satan not to bring Christ to hell. Satan reproves him for his cowardice, he boasts that he is not afraid, and has continued to fight against Christ by injuring men's souls; the examples he cites are Matthew and Zaccheus, whom he has filled with the desire of riches, although he is forced to admit that they also escaped him and followed Christ. The dialogue between Satan and Hades continues and towards the end Satan once again refers to Christ's words "My soul is sorrowful," which prove that He cannot be the son of God, since He fears death. He pays no heed to Hades' words of caution and returns to incite the Jews against Christ.³⁸

In the Armenian version Satan cites only once the words uttered by Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, and the passage corresponds to the second one in the Greek. Hades is not convinced that Christ is not the son of God, for He seems to be very strong; and as an example of Christ's power it

³⁷ G. La Piana, *op. cit.*, 89, and 327-29.

³⁸ P.G. 86.I, 384-401.

is Hades, and not Satan, who first mentions Lazarus. Hades also gives other examples of Christ's or God's power, namely the daughter of Jairus who was raised from the dead, and the Egyptians who were killed as they pursued the Israelites; neither one of these examples occurs in the Greek. When Satan chides Hades for his cowardice and boasts of his own strength, he does not mention Matthew or Zaccheus, who are obviously poor examples since he did not triumph over them, but he refers instead to the Flood, to the people of Sodom, to the death of Korah, Dathan and Abiram in order to substantiate his claim that he polluted the souls of men.³⁹

It should be observed that the order of the Armenian version not only avoids unnecessary repetition, but that it is closer to that of the Gospel of Nicodemus. There also it is Hades, and not Satan, who first speaks of Lazarus, and his mention comes soon after Satan's remark that Christ cannot be the Son of God since He fears death.⁴⁰

Another example of a change in the order and consequent avoidance of repetition occurs towards the end of the narrative, when the Powers command Hades to open the gates of hell. In the Greek text the command is given twice, before and after the dialogue between Satan and Hades; in the Armenian version the command follows the dialogue, but the passage is based on the fuller text of the first command, when Hades asks: "Who is the King of Glory?"

Considerable sections of the Armenian version do not occur in the Greek homilies; the most important are the passages which concern John the Baptist and those which refer to Adam.

It will be remembered that the Armenian version has no author's name and the title presents this narrative as the story of John the Baptist. In keeping with this, we have a brief summary of John's life. The writer follows the Gospel text, adding only that John was conceived on October 9, which is the date celebrated in the Armenian church.⁴¹ After asking the prophets to say what they had prophesied about the coming of Christ, John gives a long list of the miracles which, he says, he can recount "as an eye witness and not by conjecture, for I myself baptized him." These words recall the corresponding passage of the Gospel of Nicodemus when John says to the prophets:

³⁹ Sodom and Gomorrha are mentioned by the Antichrist as one of his triumphs in a Latin version of the Gospel of Bartholomew. U. Moricca, "Un nuovo testo dell' Evangelo di Bartolomeo," in *Revue Biblique* (1921) 510.

⁴⁰ Tischendorf, *op. cit.*, 304-5; M. R. James, *op. cit.*, 129-132.

⁴¹ G. Bayan, "Le Synaxaire arménien de Ter Israel" in *Patrologia orientalis*, XV, 297. The same date is given in the Armenian Infancy Gospel: P. Peeters, *Evangelies apocryphes*, II (Paris, 1914) 82 and footnote.

"and with mine hands I baptized him in the river Jordan." ⁴² But the idea of recounting the miracles is peculiar to the Armenian version. This rather confused list of eighteen miracles includes several which were performed after John's death, and some which cannot be easily recognized. The sixth miracle is mentioned as follows: "on the thirtieth He healed the sick." The only explanation that I can suggest is that we have a faulty copy of a reference to the miracle at the pool of Bethesda when Christ cured the man who "had an infirmity thirty and eight years" (John 5:5). The sixteenth miracle is the raising of the dead girl. This could refer only to the daughter of Jairus, but she is already mentioned in the eleventh miracle; nor can we suppose that there is a confusion with the raising of the widow's son at Nain, since he too has previously been mentioned in the ninth miracle. The entire passage seems to me to be a later addition introduced to give greater prominence to John.

One of the notable differences between the Greek homilies and the Gospel of Nicodemus is the omission of any reference to Adam in the former. By the important role given to Adam, the Armenian version comes closer to the Gospel of Nicodemus, even though there is no exact correspondence between the passages concerning him. In the Gospel, Seth repeats the promise made by God when, at the time of Adam's death, he went to seek the oil from the tree of mercy; this promise was that the only-begotten Son of God shall come down upon earth, He will anoint Adam with the oil and Adam shall be healed of every disease.⁴³ When Christ enters hell, He raises Adam, and blesses him "upon his forehead with the sign of the cross."⁴⁴ Neither Seth nor the tree of mercy is mentioned in our Armenian text. Adam repeats to John the promise that had been made directly to him by God at the time of his expulsion. In this promise of Adam's salvation through the Incarnation there is specific mention of the destruction of hell and of the honors that await Adam, he will lead the prophets into paradise and they shall witness his glory. There is a second reference to Adam's importance in John's words when, after speaking of Christ's miracles, he adds: "And He gave me this staff and said: Give it to Adam and say to the prophets do not despair. . ." Finally when Christ arrives, Adam reminds Him of God's promise and Christ says to him: "Take the multitude of prophets and enter the garden of thy delight; there shalt thou see Enoch and Elias and they shall

⁴² Tischendorf, *op. cit.*, 303; M. R. James, *op. cit.*, 125.

⁴³ Tischendorf, *op. cit.*, 303-4; M. R. James, *op. cit.*, 127. See the corresponding passage in the so-called Apocalypse of Moses: R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, II (Oxford, 1913) 144.

⁴⁴ Tischendorf, *op. cit.*, 308. M. R. James, *op. cit.*, 139.

witness thy glory. For I ascended the cross for thee and I was slapped for thee."

The Armenian apocryphal literature is particularly rich in texts concerning Adam,⁴⁵ yet in none of these do we find passages corresponding to the ones just mentioned, and which could be considered as their source. In the Book of Adam and Eve, God promises Adam to restore him to his primal glory and set him on the throne of his deceiver, but in the Armenian version of this apocryphon, as in the Greek original, this promise is made after Adam's death when his soul is cleansed in the Acherusian lake.⁴⁶ In order to find closer parallels we must turn to the apocrypha preserved in Syriac, Arabic and Ethiopian versions, and known as the Cave of Treasures, the Book of the Rolls, and the Testament of Adam.

As in our Armenian text, the promise of the incarnation and the salvation of mankind is made directly to Adam, at the time of his expulsion from paradise. God says: "Be not sorrowful, O Adam, for I will restore unto thee thine inheritance . . . after the fulfillment of the time which I have allotted that you shall be an exile outside [Paradise], in the land which is under the curse, behold, I will send my Son. And He shall go down [from heaven] for thy redemption, and He shall sojourn in a Virgin, and shall put on a body [of flesh], and through Him redemption and a return shall be effected for thee."⁴⁷ Before dying Adam repeats this promise to Seth, who writes out this "Testament," seals it and places it in the Cave of Treasures. The form of the promise in the Testament is even closer to that of our Armenian text for God speaks in the first person of the Incarnation and of all that will take place. "And after five days and half a day I will have compassion upon thee. . . And I will come down into thy house and I will dwell in thy flesh, and for thy sake I will be pleased to be born like an [ordinary] child. And for thy sake I will be pleased to walk in the market place . . . to fast forty days . . . to accept baptism . . . to endure suffering . . . to hang on the wood

⁴⁵ For a discussion of these books and the bibliography see the article by J. B. Frey, entitled "Les livres d'Adam conservés en arménien," in *Dictionnaire de la Bible. Supplément*, vol. I, s.n. *Adam*, col. 125-132.

⁴⁶ Charles, *op. cit.*, 150. *Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament* (in Armenian) (Venice, 1896) 19-20. English translation by F. C. Conybeare, "On the Apocalypse of Moses," in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, VII (1894) 232-3.

⁴⁷ E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Cave of Treasures . . . translated from the Syriac text of the British Museum, MS. Add. 25875* (London, 1927) 67. See also Carl Bezold, *Die Schatzhöhle. Aus dem syrischen Texte dreier unedierten Handschriften ins deutsche übersetzt*. (Leipzig, 1883) 7. M. Dunlop Gibson, "Apocrypha arabica. Kitāb-al-Magāl, or the Book of the Rolls, one of the Books of Clement," *Studia Sinaitica*, VIII (London, 1901) 10. S. Grébaut, "Littérature éthiopienne pseudo-clémentine. III. Traduction du Qalémentos," in *Revue de l'Orient chrétien*, XVI (1911) 169.

of the Cross. All these things [will I do] for thy sake, O Adam.”⁴⁸ In the Syriac fragments published by Komsko, and in the Arabic Book of the Rolls, this passage is longer and ends with a reference to Christ’s burial and resurrection, but there is no mention of the descent into hell.⁴⁹ This might easily have been added in a homily which centers around this theme; however it is also found in the Ethiopic Book of Adam and Eve. When Adam asks for the water of life that he may drink and live, God answers: “O Adam, as to what thou sayest, ‘Bring me into a land where there is rest,’ it is not another land than this, but it is the kingdom of heaven where [alone] there is rest. But thou canst not make thy entrance into it at present; but [only] after thy judgment is past and fulfilled. Then will I make thee go up into the kingdom of heaven, thee and thy righteous seed; and I will give thee and them the rest thou askest for at present. And if thou saidst, ‘Give me of the Water of Life that I may drink and live,’ it cannot be this day, but on the day that I shall descend into hell, and break the gates of brass, and bruise in pieces the kingdom of iron. Then will I in mercy save thy soul and the souls of the righteous [to give them] rest in My garden. And that shall be when the end of the world is come.”^{49bis} This promise is repeated a number of times in answer to Adam’s entreaties, and in one instance Adam begs God “to let [him] return into the garden, and look at it a second time.”⁵⁰

According to the Armenian chronicler Samuel of Ani (*ca.* 1179), some Nestorian missionaries had come to Armenia in 591 and brought with them apocryphal books written in Syriac. The missionaries were expelled, but they had made some converts who translated these books into Armenian; and Samuel of Ani gives the list of the books. Two of these are of interest in the present case: the Penitence of Adam and the Testament, which was probably the Testament of Adam.⁵¹

We have no way of knowing if these two apocrypha, or the Book of Adam mentioned by the thirteenth-century historian Mekhit’ar of Ayrevank,⁵² were translations of the Cave of Treasures and the Testament of Adam discussed above, but passages in surviving apocrypha suggest some knowledge of these texts. God’s promise to Adam, before the latter’s death,

⁴⁸ E. A. Wallis Budge, *op. cit.*, 247; Grébaud, *op. cit.*, 174–75.

⁴⁹ M. Komsko, “Testamentum patris nostri Adam,” in *Patrologia syriaca*, II (1907) 1341–44; see also p. 1348. M. Dunlop Gibson, *op. cit.*, 15–16.

^{49bis} S. C. Malan, *The Book of Adam and Eve, also called the Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* (London, 1882) 44.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁵¹ *Samuel of Ani*, edited by A. Ter Mik’elian (Vagharshapat, 1893) 76–7. See the Latin translation in Migne, P.G. 19, 685.

⁵² M. R. James, *The Lost Apocrypha of the Old Testament* (London, 1936) pp. XIII–XIV.

is recalled in the Story of the Sons of Adam. "When Adam, after the deception by Satan, fasted for five days . . . God relented and sent His angel and told him of the incarnation, and of his deliverance from the hands of Satan."⁵³ In the story of Adam's expulsion from Paradise, which deals mainly with the pact between Adam and Satan, God again relents when Adam repents, and He says: "I shall not leave thee a slave in the hands of Satan for thou art my image . . . At the beginning of the sixth millennium, I shall send from the light of my Godhead my beloved son who will come and take body from thy child, from the holy and immaculate Virgin. . . And my son shall destroy the pact written by thee, and shall deliver thee from the captivity of Satan and shall restore thee to thy primal glory."⁵⁴

It may be argued that except for the fact that God's promise is made directly to Adam, while he is still living, these passages do not introduce any idea that was not already in the Greek and Armenian books of Adam and Eve. The connection with Syriac texts is closer in the Armenian Infancy Gospel. According to this account the Magi brought with them a document written and sealed by God, which had been given by Adam to Seth, transmitted from father to son until Abraham gave it to Melchisedech and the latter to Cyrus, king of Persia.⁵⁵ This document is none other than the Testament of Adam for it contained God's promise: "In the six thousandth year, on the sixth day, I shall send my only-begotten son, the Son of man, and I shall restore thee to thy primal glory. And then shalt thou Adam, being united to God, become a god, able to recognize good and evil, as one of us."⁵⁶

One other Armenian apocryphon should be mentioned as an example of the prominence given to Adam. The Armenian version of the Anaphora of Pilate, that is, the report written by him to Tiberius, does not differ sub-

⁵³ *Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament* (in Armenian) 314.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 314.

⁵⁵ *Apocryphal Books of the New Testament* (in Armenian) 46-7, 294-5, 305; P. Peeters, *op. cit.*, 137-38.

⁵⁶ *Apocryphal Books*, 51, 276, 294, 304-5; P. Peeters, *op. cit.*, 148. According to the Oriental apocryphal texts the Magi were to bring only the gold, incense and myrrh, which were hidden in the Cave of Treasures with the Testament, but the Testament is mentioned in a Syriac account of the Death of the Virgin, "And the Magi came and brought the offerings and they brought the testament of Adam with them" (A. Smith Lewis, "Apocrypha Syriaca," *Studia Sinaitica* XI [London, 1902] 41). In two recensions of the Latin Infancy Gospels and in an Irish version there is a general reference to the ancient books from which the Magi had learned about the birth of Christ (M. R. James, *Latin Infancy Gospels. A new text with a parallel version from Irish* [Cambridge, 1927] 88 and 117). In the *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum. Homilia II* the connection with the Testament is more clear, "Audivi aliquos referentes de quadam scriptura . . . quoniam erat quaedam gens sita in ipso principio orientis juxta Oceanum, apud quos ferebatur quaedam scriptura, inscripta nomine Seth, de apparitura hac stella, et muneribus ei hujusmodi offerendis, quae per generationes studiosorum hominum, patribus referentibus filiis suis, habebatur deducta" (P.G. 56, 637).

stantially from the Greek and Syriac versions. However in one manuscript there is an interesting addition to the passage concerning the men in luminous apparel who appeared and proclaimed the Resurrection of Christ. According to this recension, when the earth was cleft down to the foundations, one could see Christ in hell saying: "Awake Adam and arise from the dead; awake, thou that sleepest in darkness that my light may illumine thee; awake and be strengthened thou that sittest in darkness; awake and be clothed in immortality, thou who sat in the shadow of death; awake and be freed, thou who wast bound by poverty [?] as with an iron"; and having said this he ascended to heaven.⁵⁷

This development, based on the words of S. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians 5:14, "awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light," is closely paralleled in the Easter Eve homily ascribed to Epiphanius. When Christ takes Adam by the hand and raises him, He repeats the words just cited and continues: "I, thy God, who for thy sake became thy son . . . now I say . . . to the prisoners, Go forth; to those that are in darkness, Show yourselves; to those that sleep, Arise, and to thee, O sleeping one, Arise . . . let us go hence, from death to life, from corruption to incorruption, from darkness to eternal light, from suffering to joy, from bondage to freedom, from prison to the heavenly Jerusalem, from captivity to the delights of Paradise, from earth to Heaven."⁵⁸

Our text has in common with the Armenian New Testament apocrypha the number of years which were to elapse until the coming of Christ, that is, six thousand years instead of five thousand five hundred. But in other respects the passages concerning Adam follow more closely the Book of the Rolls and allied texts. The similarity is particularly apparent in the words addressed by Christ to Adam when He releases him from Hades: "Take the multitude of prophets and enter the garden of thy delight . . . for I ascended the cross for thee, and I was slapped for thee." These words are a contraction of the fairly long development in which God foretells all that the Son of Man will suffer for Adam's sake.⁵⁹

I have not found elsewhere any mention of the staff which Christ asked

⁵⁷ *Apocryphal Books of the New Testament*, 369, footnote. This long development does not occur in the Greek text (Tischendorf, *op. cit.*, 418-9) nor in the Syriac and Arabic versions (M. Dunlop Gibson, "Apocrypha Sinaitica. I. Anaphora Pilati," *Studia Sinaitica*, V [1896] 5-6).

⁵⁸ Migne, P.G. 43, 461-4; Mac Culloch, *op. cit.*, 195-6.

⁵⁹ See references in note 48, p. 216. In the Gospel or Questions of Bartholomew Christ says that He came to earth for Adam's sake. "It was Adam the first-formed, for whose sake I came down from heaven upon earth. And I said unto him: 'I was hung upon the cross for thee and for thy children's sake.' And he, when he heard it, groaned and said: 'So was thy good pleasure, O Lord'" (M. R. James, *op. cit.*, 169).

John the Baptist to give to Adam. It was no doubt sent as a foretoken of the fulfillment of God's promise, the symbol of the exalted position to which Adam was to be restored, the visible sign of the leader since, in our text, it is Adam who leads the souls into paradise.⁶⁰ The idea of the kingship of Adam, already suggested in the Book of the Secrets of Enoch,⁶¹ is more clearly set forth in different apocrypha. According to the Book of the Rolls, Adam appeared like a king before the expulsion, "he was dressed with a royal robe, he wore upon his head a diadem of glory and praise and honor and dignity, he was crowned with a royal crown, and there he was made king and priest and prophet. God set him upon a throne of honour."⁶²

Some of the other differences between the Greek homilies and the Armenian version also deserve to be mentioned. When Christ enters hell the prophets mock Satan, they tread on his head and say: "Thou didst say, 'I shall place my throne on the clouds,' and now thou art fallen on the coals of unextinguishable fire." In the Greek text they merely rejoice when they hear the Powers, they urge Hades to open the gates and they give praises to Christ when He enters.⁶³ But references to the scornful attitude of the prophets and forefathers may be found in the Gospel of Nicodemus. In the Greek text when Hades orders the gates to be closed, the forefathers begin "to insult him, saying: 'Thou that devourest all and art insatiate, open, that the King of glory may come in.'" According to the second Latin version, "David's anger was kindled against Satan, and he cried aloud: 'Open thou most foul one, thy gates, that the King of glory may come in.' Likewise also all the saints of God rose up against Satan and would have laid hold on him and parted him among them."⁶⁴ When Christ enters hell, He binds Satan, casts him into Tartarus and sets His holy foot upon his throat.⁶⁵ We have the same idea of trampling on Satan, though here it is Christ who treads on his throat. In the Gospel of Bartholomew Jesus tells Bartholomew to go and

⁶⁰ In the Greek text of the Homilies, Christ tells the souls who have been released to go to paradise, and they run, rejoicing (P.G. 62, 723). In the Gospel of Nicodemus Christ went "into paradise holding our forefather Adam by the hand, and delivered him, and all the righteous, unto Michael the archangel" (M. R. James, *op. cit.*, 140).

⁶¹ R. H. Charles, *op. cit.*, II, 449: "and I appointed him as ruler to rule on earth and to have my wisdom."

⁶² M. D. Gibson, *op. cit.*, 6. We find a similar description in the Cave of Treasures: A. W. Budge, *op. cit.*, 53; Bezold, *op. cit.*, 4. I do not believe that the staff brought by John to Adam has any connection with the stories of the branch of the tree which, according to a fragmentary Armenian text, an angel gave to Seth and told him to take to Adam (*Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament*, 331).

⁶³ P.G. 62, 723.

⁶⁴ Tischendorf, *op. cit.*, 306 and 407; M. R. James, *op. cit.*, 133.

⁶⁵ Tischendorf, *op. cit.*, 408; M. R. James, *op. cit.*, Latin B, p. 135.

tread upon the neck of Beliar, "and Bartholomew ran quickly upon him and trode upon his neck."⁶⁶

The Armenian version establishes two categories among those who have been redeemed. Adam is told by Christ to take the prophets and to enter paradise where he will find Enoch and Elias; as for the other multitudes they are "established in the dwellings of heaven, opposite paradise," where they are to await the coming of the Savior. In the Greek homilies all those who have been raised enter paradise.⁶⁷

The other differences between the Greek and Armenian texts are less important. Very few of the prophecies uttered by David and the prophets concur; in the Armenian version they are taken for the most part from the Psalms, although, as in the Greek text, they are selected in such a way that they cover the salient events of the life of Christ. But even in the different recensions of the Greek text published so far, the selection is not always the same and divergencies may also be observed between the Greek original and the other versions.⁶⁸ Finally, Satan's short soliloquy after the crucifixion is a rhetorical development which does not introduce any new element.

These differences between the Greek and Armenian texts are of interest in several respects. If some passages, like the confused list of Christ's miracles, may be considered as later additions, others, and in particular those which refer to Adam, belong to an old tradition. Moreover, we have observed that frequently the Armenian version is closer to the Gospel of Nicodemus even though it does not exactly correspond to it.

The question whether or not these passages originally formed part of the archetype and were discarded from the Greek in the course of time cannot be elucidated until we know more about the Greek text itself. These homilies are generally considered as an elaboration of the story told in the Gospel of Nicodemus, and the marked differences between the texts of the few manuscripts published so far show that they underwent considerable modifica-

⁶⁶ M. R. James, *op. cit.*, 174; the order is repeated, and Bartholomew "went and trode upon his neck, and pressed down his face into the earth as far as his ears" (175).

⁶⁷ P.G. 62, 723; The Lord says to the prophets "go into paradise," and they run, rejoicing. There is no mention of other groups. In the Gospel of Nicodemus the Savior blesses Adam with the sign of the cross, also "all the patriarchs and prophets and martyrs and forefathers. And he took them and leaped up out of hell. . . He went therefore into paradise holding our forefather Adam by the hand, and delivered him, and all the righteous, unto Michael the archangel," and all enter paradise (Tischendorf, *op. cit.*, 308-9; M. R. James, *op. cit.*, 139-140).

⁶⁸ P.G. 86.1, 513-515. We find the following prophecies in the Russian version: Psalm 72:6; Isaiah 7:14; Psalm 45:16; Isaiah 1:14; Psalm 41:9; Isaiah 3:14; Jeremiah 11, 19; Psalm 88:6. See *Glasnik*, 63 (1885) 79.

tion.⁶⁹ Their authorship is far from certain. Eusebius of Alexandria (either the writer of the fifth century or his namesake of the sixth century) is now given the preference over Eusebius of Emesa who died in 360, since it is believed that the homilies are based on the Gospel of Nicodemus, usually assigned to the fourth or the fifth century. But we have seen that even the name of Eusebius has not always been retained; the Arab version is ascribed to John Chrysostom and the Armenian, at least in the single copy known so far, does not have any author's name.

The problems raised by the passages which do not occur in the Greek text are also connected with the complex question of the sources of the Cave of Treasures and allied apocrypha.⁷⁰ Greek fragments of the Testament of Adam have been discovered,⁷¹ but the Cave of Treasures was apparently written in Syriac. Nor are we sure if there existed Armenian versions of the apocrypha from which the Armenian translator of our narrative might have borrowed the passages concerning Adam, and introduced them into his text. We have seen that some Old and New Testament apocrypha suggest a knowledge of the Testament of Adam, but these passages may have existed in the models of these apocrypha and have no direct connection with the Testament itself.⁷²

Finally the fact that the passages relating to Adam differ from the ones contained in the Gospel of Nicodemus and follow more closely the text of the Cave of Treasures or Testament of Adam makes one wonder whether there may have existed a Syriac intermediary between the Greek archetype and the Armenian version. This question can be answered only by a specialist of the Syriac language who is also familiar with Armenian.

There are no definite indications in the Armenian version from which the date may be inferred. The language is fairly close to that of the first part of the Acts of Pilate, usually assigned to the fifth or sixth century. We can safely assume, at any rate, that it was translated before the ninth century

⁶⁹ La Piana, *op. cit.*, 86–89; F. Nau, "Notes. Sur diverses homélies pseudépigraphiques, sur les oeuvres attribuées à Eusèbe d'Alexandrie et sur un nouveau manuscrit de la chaîne *contra Severianos*," in *Revue de l'Orient chrétien*, 13 (1908) 429–434.

⁷⁰ A. Götze, "Die Schatzhöhle. Überlieferung und Quellen," in *Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften. Phil.-hist. Klasse*. XIII. 4 (1922).

⁷¹ M. R. James, "A Fragment of the Apocalypse of Adam in Greek," in *Texts and Studies*, II, 3 (1893) 138–145. F. Nau, "Apotelesmata Apollonii Tyanensis," in *Patrologia syriaca*, II (1907) 1362–92. Götze believes that the Testament formed, at one time, part of the Cave of Treasures, *op. cit.*, p. 33, note 1.

⁷² The Armenian Infancy Gospel is translated from the Syriac, but the passage concerning the Testament brought by the Magi does not occur in the Syro-Arabic Infancy Gospel, which preserves a shorter recension. See Peeters, *op. cit.*, pp. XLVI–XLVII, and 9.

for some parts of it may be recognized in a sermon composed by the catholicos Zacharias, who died in 877.

A long section of this sermon on the Burial of Christ, which gives the story of Christ's descent into hell, was published in 1910 by B. Sarghisian, together with a passage on the same theme from one of the sermons attributed to the historian Eghishé.⁷³ According to Sarghisian both writers, especially Zacharias, were so familiar with the Gospel of Nicodemus that an Armenian version of it must have existed, he further indicated that Eghishé had borrowed passages from the homily attributed to Epiphanius of Cyprus, while Zacharias had also used a sermon attributed in some manuscripts to Theophilus of Antioch, a pupil of John Chrysostom. But he did not make any comparisons with the homilies attributed to Eusebius.

There is no connection whatsoever between these homilies and the sermon of Eghishé, but in the sermon by Zacharias we find a number of significant parallels. The passage published by Sarghisian opens with Satan's remark that for six thousand years, since the time of Adam, he has vanquished everyone, but that now he is troubled by the man Jesus. There follows a long conversation with Hades and death; the powers of hell caution Satan, and tell him that Jesus must be very powerful for he plucked from them the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow, and also Lazarus, whom they were not able to hold although his body had begun to be putrefied. When he heard Christ's voice Lazarus, "rushing like a lion, went forth."⁷⁴ In the Gospel of Nicodemus and in our Armenian narrative Lazarus's escape from hell is compared only to the flight of an eagle, but in the Greek recensions of the homily ascribed to Eusebius we read: οὕτως ἐξεπήδησεν ἐκ τοῦ κόλπου μου, ὡς λέων ἐκ σπηλαίου εἰς θήραν ἐπειγόμενος, ὡς αἰτὸς ἐξήλατο.⁷⁵

Further on in the sermon, when Zacharias speaks of the men who had risen from the dead and who were asked by the Jews how they had come to life or who had made them rise, he adds, "And they answered: 'Jesus of Nazareth, whom you crucified; he cried out on the cross and the keepers of hell were frightened, like the animals at the voice of the lion, or the doves of partridges by the fluttering of the eagle's wings.'"⁷⁶ These last words repeat a sentence of our narrative, which does not occur in the Greek text. We are told that Satan and his legions, frightened by the signs they witnessed,

⁷³ B. Sarghisian, "Eghishé's Oration on the Burial of Christ and the Gospel of Nicodemus," (in Armenian) in *Basmavep*, 68 (1910) 465-478; *Idem*, "Eghishé and the Gospel of Nicodemus in Catholicos Zacharias," *l.c.*, 543-57. Eghishé's oration is published in his collected works (Venice, 1859) 240-354; the section on the Descent into Hell is on pp. 297-9.

⁷⁴ B. Sarghisian, in *Basmavep*, 68 (1910), 551.

⁷⁵ P. G. 86.1, 392.

⁷⁶ B. Sarghisian, *op. cit.*, 553.

fled "like a covey of partridges when they hear the fluttering of the eagle's wings."

Satan and Hades are troubled by the approach of Christ and Hades says: "Ever since the arrival of John, the son of the old woman, they are joyful; perchance he brought them some tidings from Him, for ever since that day they all rejoice merrily."⁷⁷ These words are comparable to the passage at the beginning of the Greek homilies and the Armenian version, following the arrival of John the Baptist and his conversation with the prophets, when Hades wonders why the souls are suddenly so joyful.

When the gates of hell have been fastened the souls are anxious, wondering whether Satan and Hades will be able to resist by force, and they begin to question the prophets asking them what the Holy Ghost has said through them. Whereupon Moses answers, "For a fire is kindled in mine anger and shall burn into the lowest hell." And David says, "he hath broken the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron in sunder," and he repeats several of his other prophecies.⁷⁸ The anxiety of the souls imprisoned in hell is again comparable to the passage at the very beginning of our narrative and the Greek original, when the souls question John, saying, "will the Lord come here, for great despair possesses us," and others say, "He will not submit himself to torments and death." Upon John's request, the prophets repeat their prophecies which give reassurance to the troubled souls. David's words about the broken gates are naturally among these prophecies, both in the Greek and Armenian texts, but the words of Moses cited above occur only in the Armenian version.

All these similarities clearly indicate that the Catholicos Zacharias was familiar with the Armenian version of the homilies ascribed to Eusebius; he used it very freely, borrowing passages here and there, and introducing them in a very different order into his sermon. But the borrowing is evident, for all of these passages, or the actual words which have been used are peculiar to the homilies; and I have purposely omitted those parallels which are common to the homilies and the Gospel of Nicodemus.

In the passages concerning Adam, Zacharias follows another source. He writes that when Christ approached the gates of hell, Adam gave the good tidings to the souls and said, "Be gladdened with joy, O beloved, for God the Creator has come for our salvation." And the souls answered and said, "How didst thou know and recognize, O our father, that the Lord of glory has come to redeem those who were lost?" And Adam said, "When, deceived, I was robbed of the commandment of God, God having come down

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 554.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 555.

in the evening, on the Friday, walked in paradise . . . and now at the same fateful hour of Friday, the sound of the approaching footstep has come, and He will remove us from the shadow of death.”⁷⁹

The Patristic references, the homiletic and apocryphal texts which have been brought together in studies on the Harrowing of Hell, are selected for the most part from Greek and Latin sources, and a few well known eastern authors like Ephrem Syrus. But, on the whole, the homiletic literature of the East Christian people has not been properly explored, and this is particularly true of Armenian literature. In the present article I wished to make known one of the texts which, so far, had escaped attention, and I hope, at some future date, to study other texts, mostly unpublished. Some of these, like the sermons of Eghishé and the Catholicos Zacharias are, as we have seen, original works based on apocryphal and other sources; others, like the narrative which forms the subject of this article, and the Easter Eve homily attributed to Epiphanius, are translations which may contribute to a fuller knowledge of the prototype, or may even preserve a text the original of which is not known. Such seems to be the case of a sermon on the Burial and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, attributed to Theophilus of Antioch, a pupil of John Chrysostom, or to the blessed Theophilus (probably referring to Theophilus of Alexandria), and of which I have not yet been able to find the Greek text.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 555.